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Detroit City Hall, 1961

National Trust for Historic Preservation

Detroit's 1871 Neo-French Renaissance style city hall was demolished in October. A campaign of several years to save it was lost.

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Historic Preservation

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Preservation Features

The "talk of the town" is the town itself and the reverberations say that it is sick at its very center. As in actuality, the city's analysts would denude it, unslum it, renew it.

After years of crying in the wilderness, preservationists finally are being heard. Until recently historic preservation generally backed in as an afterthought and was a compromise, or a giving in to a sentimental fringe of the population. Prevailing were the extreme positions of wanting to save everything, or of starting completely anew from a wasteland created by the "bulldozer brotherhood." Preservation is now part of a philosophy which wishes to preserve the distinctive character and personality of each city. A truly positive approach is "that urban renewal can be one of the strongest allies of historic preservation, to be recognized and used as such by local groups."

In this issue we are taken, by managing editor, Terry Brust Morton, on an "Urban Renewal Ramble," from Detroit to Sacramento, from Chicago to St. Augustine, from Memphis to Mobile, with detours at Louisville, Baltimore and New London, and way points. After twelve years and more than 900 projects later, and now that many of the projects are off the drawing board and in our future, the public is fully aware of the movement taking place under its feet. The knowledge that there was also a National Trust "to tell their troubles to" brought a flood of mail in the wake of the *This Week* article (September 3, 1961), written by the Honorable Frances Bolton, honorary trustee of the National Trust.

The master satirist, James Thurber, was once described by a colleague as having "a firm grasp on confusion." Before his death he had turned his wit to a book called *The Nightinghoul*. His camouflaged exasperations this time, Mr. Thurber said, were "about people of a typical town called Americanopolis and their reaction to a mechanical monster who pecks away at the cornices of their public buildings."

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall recently stated that "New York is not alone in suffering from the ills of the supermetropolis. In varying degrees, megalopolis poisoning has become a national syndrome. The cure does not lie merely in prescribing more operations on the face of America. Let us be content to look our age." He charged that "the time has come to provide machinery in our laws for the automatic preservation of such historic sites when they fall into the surplus or unneeded category; that provision be made, not for their sale, but for their addition to our great system of national parks and memorials, or their transfer to independent groups or patriotic organizations which have an interest in their preservation for time and generations to come."

"We are not only preservationists; we are, first of all, Americans intent on saving the irreplaceable features of this great civilization which we have created," National Trust members were told at the annual meeting by David E. Finley, chairman of the Board of Trustees. "To this end of educating the public in this particular field, the Trust is committed, and many other organizations also. We are fighting against a trend, but ultimately I believe that we shall succeed. For once the American people are convinced that a course of action is right and in their best interest, they will give it their support, and there can then be no doubt of the outcome."

Helen Duprey Bullock

Urban Renewal Ramble

DETROIT

A watery grave was given to Detroit's Old City Hall, the city's last remaining example of the French Second Empire style and a center of controversy for several years. Trucks hauled tons of debris daily during October from the site of the building at Woodward and Michigan. The debris has been dropped into water 12 feet deep to form part of a 60-foot-wide pier that stands four feet above the water line and eventually will extend 2,500 feet out into Lake St. Clair. Old City Hall will be identifiable only as that stretch of pier between 1,100 and 1,700 feet out into the lake.

Russell Lynes, writing on "The Erosion of Detroit" and the plight of City Hall, stated "the point was far less the need to preserve a distinguished architectural monument than to try to maintain some of the pleasant quality of the city of which they were fond. Eighteenth-century buildings were, of course, nearly as rare as nightingales in Detroit, though there had been several and the last one disappeared only a few years ago. The early nineteenth-century buildings had almost all been wrecked and the last half of the century was disappearing rapidly... victims of expressways, of urban renewal programs, of real-estate developments, and, of course, of apathy, decay and changes in taste.

"This same conversation could have taken place in San Francisco, in New York, in Bridgeport, in any American city with a past and presumably a future. The delights of a city are in its variety, the richness of its texture, the patchwork of its growth, its surprises and its accidents of taste. Crash programs of urban redevelopment that clear away slums instead of revitalizing old buildings (which happily is now being done in some cities) primarily serve the interests of the suburban developers; they drive people away from the city. And this is all right with more and more Americans who live in the suburbs and do not understand people who love cities."

SACRAMENTO

Historical values of the buildings and settings in Old Sacramento, threatened by various proposed routes of the North-South Freeway in Sacramento, Calif., are worth preserving, the Department of Interior recently announced. In reporting a study made by the National Park Service, the department said "only the so-called route Z—west of the Sacramento River in Yolo County—would not affect Old Sacramento. Any of the other routes on the east side of the river would require demolition or removal of old buildings of considerable historic interest and value, not only to Sacramento but to the entire nation."

The study, undertaken on instructions from Frederick G. Dutton, secretary of the President's Cabinet, was sent to President Kennedy's office. A copy went to the Commerce Department, whose Bureau of Public Roads makes available as much as 90 percent of the money for freeways which are part of the interstate highway system.

Old Sacramento contains 31 old structures importantly associated with broad aspects of Western history and with notable men and events, the report states. These buildings offer an opportunity to recreate and preserve a significant segment of the pioneer Western scene for the inspiration, education and enjoyment of future generations.

"The large-scale demolition of so many historic structures should be a matter of deep concern, and determined efforts should be made to avoid such destruction," warned the National Park Service. "If the choice has to be made, removal of historic buildings is to be preferred over demolition."

Sacramento, which became the state capital in 1854, was also the trading, transportation and communications center connecting the Mother Lode mining area with the nation. Two of the buildings in Old Sacramento, the Big Four House and the Hastings Building, are eligible to be Registered National Historic Landmarks. The Big Four Building was the first general office of the Central Pacific Railroad organized in 1861. Here the "Big Four"—Huntington, Stanford, Hopkins and Charles Crocker, assisted by the engineer Theodore Judah—planned, financed and built the western end (California to Utah) of the first transcontinental railway. Here also the "Big Four" obtained control of the Southern Pacific Railroad and began the construction of that line to Southern California.

The Hastings Building served as the original western terminal of the Pony Express from April 1860 to March 1861. From 1858-63 it was the office of the California State Telegraph Company, which helped to construct the first transcontinental telegraph line in 1860-61.

The two-story brick building, erected in 1853, was occupied by B. F. Hastings and Co., the State Library, the State Supreme Court and Wells, Fargo and Co. The Hastings Building is one of the only two structures associated with the Pony Express and Overland Mail still standing in California.

ARCHITECTURE AND THE CITYSCAPE

Excerpts from article by Catherine Bauer Wurster, Journal *of the American Institute of Architects, March 1961*

Central redevelopment likewise tends to be overstandardized in huge projects, whose character is more positive but also more brutal than suburbia because of an opposite weakness, extremely high densities. Moreover, the clearance and reconstruction process usually obliterates everything in its path with the ruthless insensitivity of a blitzkrieg. Much of local history, distinctive character and personal association is lost along with the slums, while what takes their place is likely to be pretty much the same across the country. Freeways have the same devastating effect, in both urban and rural areas.

* * *

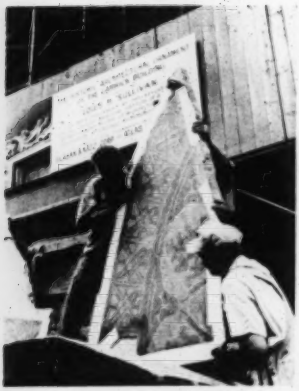
If a poll were taken as to the best-designed modern cities, in terms of visual enjoyment and distinction, I suspect that most experts and laymen alike would nominate Stockholm and Copenhagen. But why?

Of course, they both have richer historic remnants than most American cities, but their careful attention to preserving the past and using it to heighten the interest of the modern cityscape may make this difference seem greater than it really is. In any case they are essentially as new as our cities, and it is the recent development that dominates the scene.

Stockholm has a dramatic site, but Copenhagen is as flat as a prairie town. Both cities, however, have used landscape and waterscape with perspicacity, for all kinds of recreation, fine views, effective siting of new and old buildings, and to enhance the sense of basic geography and urban structure. By comparison, all American cities have neglected their natural resources for urban design.

Downtown Bethlehem, Pa., will soon be cleared of slums, rubbish and ugly lots. Pre-Revolutionary workshops and factories are to be restored in the foreground, part of the Monocacy Creek Urban Renewal area. Top right are buildings of the Moravian Church and Moravian College South Campus. The early structures are still in use; exteriors and principal interiors are being restored.

Leonard Cotton House (*c.* 1750) Portsmouth, N.H., beyond the junk heaps, is one of the structures to be saved in a community action program. Strawbery Banke, Inc., plans to rescue the area to demonstrate Portsmouth's role in the 18th-century maritime development of the nation.



Sullivan's Garrick Theatre

Chicago's 92-year-old water tower, left in the middle of Michigan Avenue, stands in contrast to the $6 million 15-story Water Tower Inn, Chicago's new luxury hotel. "The Chicago Water Tower," writes John Maass, "looks like a giant toy and is a well-loved landmark of the Windy City. It was built in the 60's and survived the Great Fire of 1871."

CHICAGO

Chicagoans seems to have more nostalgic sentiment about the good old days of Al Capone when the sewers were clogged with corpses than they do about the city's historic buildings. Chicago still has a few landmarks which are recognized from New York to Paris as historic treasures. But Chicagoans are more interested in night clubs and parking lots.

These are charges levelled at Chicago's citizens in an article, "What Chicago Could Be Proud Of," in the December issue of *Harper's Magazine*, written by Elinor Richey of the Chicago Heritage Committee.

"Chicago has been steadily razing its most famous buildings over the past five years," she writes. "By 1970, if the present wrecking rate continues, most of them will be remembered only in photographs. Protests from American architectural societies and magazines have been unavailing. So have the more recent protests of the European architectural press.

"Chicago finds such criticism diverting, especially when it is embellished by exotic foreign postmarks and famous names. But it has been obdurately unmoved by what it regards as an obstreperous 'egghead protest,' led by local architecture professors and students along with a few young practicing architects and miscellaneous culture enthusiasts."

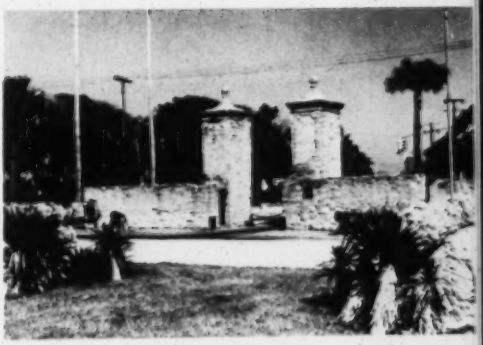
The article praises the efforts of two Chicagoans—Tom Stauffer, a professor of humanities at Wilson Junior College, and Leon Despres, "the only 'political Independent' on the City Council": and details the trials of Richard Nickel, a young photographer, in attempting to save the Garrick Theatre Building.

SAINT AUGUSTINE

Under the direction of the St. Augustine Restoration and Preservation Commission, which aims to carry the old city back in time toward the era of old Spain in the New World, citizens are working and looking forward to the 400th birthday celebration of Saint Augustine in 1965.

The Commission is governed by an architectural policy, adopted as a guide for its future action. As stated by its executive director Earle Newton, "It shall be the objective of this Commission to obtain, with its own resources and those of others, as nearly as possible a restoration of the ancient walled city of Saint Augustine. Recognizing that this area includes the present business heart of the modern city, and that the ultimate sources of funds to accomplish its objective are as yet uncertain, the Commission proposes to divide its project into a series of stages, which may be approached over a succession of years to minimize any possible unfavorable impact on local business interests.

"The work which this Commission will undertake will be based on the most authentic information which can be derived from careful documentary, architectural and archeological investigation, carried to every reasonable limit within the resources of the Commission and other cooperating bodies. Where preservation can be accomplished, it shall take precedence over restoration; where restoration can be accomplished it will take precedence over reconstruction. Where historic buildings have disappeared, but recreation of the historic environment is deemed important, they shall be reconstructed, in the form and on the site they originally existed. Where historical data as to their original form is not complete, reasonably representative structures may be reconstructed, and sympathetic uses found for them.



St. Augustine City Gates

"It is not to be assumed that all, or any large part of these restored or reconstructed structures will be opened to the public, and it shall be the objective of the Commission to seek uses which can be considered appropriate within a historic restoration area, such as residences, or businesses serving the visiting public. In areas designed as transition areas because of the intensity of their present business use, the Commission shall encourage the development of temporary compatible Spanish colonial architectures of the type used in Saint Augustine, except where so doing involves an undue capital investment which might impede the ultimate authentic restoration of the area. In areas projected for early restoration, no further investment in non-historic buildings, for building or remodeling, shall be encouraged.

"The Commission shall in every way encourage private owners to restore accurately their property, providing advice and counsel. It shall endeavor to protect those who do so, as well as the historic interests of the community as a whole, by cooperating with the city to institute adequate historic zoning and taxation policies. It will cooperate with the city in providing adequate facilities and a hospitable environment for those who live within the historic areas, and will recognize equal obligations to past and present."

"The City Hall and the Courthouse," writes Theodore M. Brown, "form an impressive civic group which could easily be brought up to date by the addition of a building expressive of America's modern, democratic man."

LOUISVILLE

Louisville's architectural past "must not be casually scraped away, like so much garbage, in preparation for the next meal," declares Theodore M. Brown in a survey of the city's architecture of the last century.

"Progress is not synonymous with destruction; we need not obliterate before we build. Healthy progress involves the graceful adjustment of past forms by present needs into future activities. A sound knowledge of our existing facilities and a sense of their potential is the first requirement in this process of environmental adjustment.

"We must be conscious of our past before we can hope to build for an unknown future. We must be conscious of our past if we are to evolve a healthy culture, if we are, indeed, to have a culture."

The survey, initiated by the Citizen's Metropolitan Planning Committee and sponsored by Louisville Central Area, Inc., was conducted by Robert J. Doherty and Dr. Brown, professors at the University of Louisville. The 240 buildings deemed worthy of consideration for preservation and/or rehabilitation during the present alteration and expansion of the city are also listed in *Introduction to Louisville Architecture*, written by Dr. Brown from the survey.

"The examples discussed and illustrated," writes Dr. Brown, "were selected from buildings of the Louisville downtown area; with few exceptions, they are relatively unknown, rank-and-file works. Emphasis was placed upon comparatively obscure buildings instead of the generally recognized ones for several reasons: although not 'great' architecture, most of the buildings illustrated are fine architectural pieces; the pervasive, everyday buildings that we take for granted are one of the strongest factors in determining the visual character of a city; because vernacular architecture forms the material and visual backbone of a city, it is of major significance for both the present and future of Louisville; and finally, most of us need a fresh introduction to the significant objects and

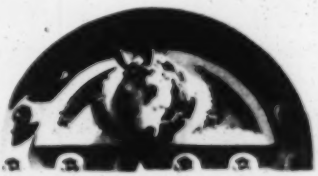
images of our city that may be ignored because of over-familiarity or lack of official recognition. We need to look again at our physical environment with an uncontaminated vision, as children do, in order to discover the visual delights and architectural values that tend to escape us as we scurry about our business.

"During the present frantic transformation of American cities, it is imperative that we examine our attitudes towards our history, our future, and our surroundings. No longer can we afford the profligate and calloused mutilation of precious physical facilities without inviting cultural extinction. We dare not continue to use, abuse, and discard our landscapes, our seashores, and our architecture with the reckless abandon accorded a beer can. More specifically, existing architecture should not be razed indiscriminately merely to satisfy the *tabula rasa*, excelsior impulses of our society, thus erasing all material memories of our past.

"A healthy sense of time is vital to the human mind and spirit; for without memory our consciousness functions on but a momentary level, like that of a flea. Architecture is one of the critical elements in the cultivation of our time-sense; 'We may live without her,' Ruskin affirmed, 'and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her.' Economically we can ill afford to continue squandering our architecture, and psychologically we suffer from the current practice of eviscerating our urban organisms before starting to build. We must stop converting our urban environments into timeless and valueless wastelands with no past and but a frightening future!

"Fortunately, we do not face the insoluble problem of saving everything sentimentally old or bulldozing everything old to be replaced by something dazzlingly new. Planning should start with a careful analysis of the city's existing physical facilities and cultural values. Selection should then be made (from a practical, economic, and aesthetic view) of those elements of our past which can be operationally extended into the future as living components of the growing city. Latent urban values must be uncovered and then incorporated into the values of our own time so that a stabile yesterday, the fluctuating today, and an unknown tomorrow can be harmoniously woven into a meaningful, life-enhancing setting for ourselves and our children. In the case of Louisville, its yesterday consists primarily of the nineteenth century.

"Contemporary evaluation of nineteenth-century design is ambivalent. On the one hand, this architecture is despised by some for its shameless eclecticism, its overwrought decoration, and its chaotic variety. On the other hand the Victorian era is revered by antiquarians—wrought iron decorations, encrusted chandeliers and bloated furniture becoming collectors' items. Somewhere between a wholesale condemnation of the past 150 years and a frivolous infatuation with it is a more meaningful view. If we are to develop a more mature attitude toward our origins we must sympathetically, yet critically, examine the nineteenth century to uncover its values. For our city, it is virtually the only tangible past that we possess."[1]



Pigs, cows and horses on the City Hall symbolize Louisville's stockyards.

Fontaine Mansion, Memphis

407 Church Street, Mobile

MOBILE

Historic Mobile Preservation Society, the Allied Arts Council, the Mobile Association of Architects and the Chamber of Commerce are working to save nine historic buildings in the Church Street urban renewal area, near the proposed municipal auditorium.

Urban Renewal authorities have delayed decisions on most of the structures designated as historic. They state that new uses compatible with the auditorium must be found before consideration can be given to saving the buildings.

Planners of the auditorium maintain the block should be cleared of all structures to provide an adequate view of the auditorium's main entrance. Concerned organizations and individuals maintain, however, that clearing all the structures in this block is unnecessary and that several of the historic buildings would complement the auditorium.

Three organizations and one individual have made concrete offers to the Urban Renewal Board for specific houses, and the Historic Society continues to pursue all possibilities. They have worked with Dr. Samuel Eichold in tracing the history of the structure he wishes to save. He proposes the house in which his family lived for nearly 50 years be converted into a medical museum, medical library, emergency telephone service and permanent filing headquarters for the medical group. Although the building would be on city-owned land, it would be owned by the Eichold Foundation, already established as a tax-exempt charitable organization. Rental would go to the foundation for maintenance.

"Destruction of 401, 403 and 407 Church Street and the Phoenix Fire Station in the block in front of the auditorium would accomplish nothing at this time," states Dr. Eichold. "After the auditorium is completed, the area can be seen in its true perspective and a judgment can be made."

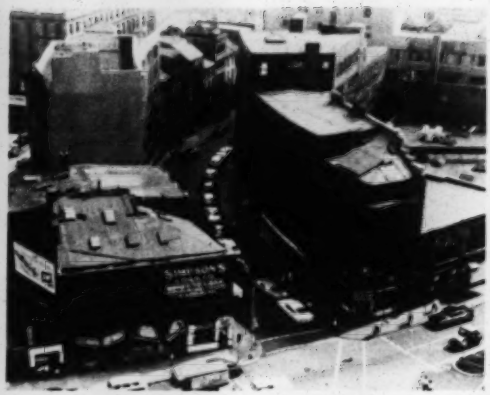
MEMPHIS

Restoration of the Lee and Fontaine houses is the latest undertaking of the Memphis Chapter of the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities. They succeeded in raising $50,000 prior to July 1, thus saving the houses from demolition, but another $150,000 is needed to restore the houses.

"The Lee and Fontaine houses," states Lucian Minor Dent, AIA of Memphis, "are as fine examples of Victorian mansions as can be found anywhere. Memphis is fortunate to have both of these in one group, with others in the immediate neighborhood. Next door is the very charming example of a Victorian cottage built by Capt. Joseph Lenow, an officer in the Mexican War, and beyond is the splendid Mallory mansion of the same period. This Lee-Fontaine APTA restoration will form a most interesting and important monument to the Victorian period.

"Memphis had its beginnings in the nineteenth cenutry, and these Victorian buildings represent the finest examples of Memphis' first lush growth. They were erected in the mid-1800's when Memphis ceased to be a small river town and its golden era of gracious living developed to the fullest.

"Visitors to Memphis every day ask to see 'some of the old houses.' We can show them through the Mageveney cottage on Adams, but not a single restored Memphis mansion is on public view. And what of our own Memphis residents? Our children need to visit these homes, as well as a Zoo, an Indian Village, and museums."



Sears Crescent on Cornhill

BOSTON

Having saved their Old Corner Book Store, Bostonians now join forces to save Sears Crescent on Cornhill from the developers of Scollay Square Government Center area. Sixteen of the city's historians and university librarians are pleading with the five-member board of the Boston Redevelopment Authority to save the brick structure housing several bookshops.

Lead by Walter Muir Whitehill, director of the Boston Athenaeum and National Trust trustee, the group is asking that the charm of the open-air bookstalls be preserved. They believe that the structure is sufficiently architecturally and historically important to hold its own in the shadow of new public buildings in the $100 million complex. In stating its position, the committee reported that the building represents a prime example of surviving Victorian architecture, and as such will anchor the design of the northern sector of the project area. Without a building like the Sears block, the cleavage between the new, vast city hall plaza and the older section of narrow Tremont and Court streets would be far too abrupt.

Ammunition for their cause may be found in "The Struggle for Redevelopment," by Bostonian Fred Smith, vice president of the Prudential Insurance Company (October 1961 *Journal* of the American Institute of Architects).

". . . And do we decide, as so many before us have decided, that, as part of our rehabilitation, we need new access highways—which of course we do—and then head directly for the open lands, the park lands, the recreation areas and the historic sites, which, since they are already in state or local ownership, provide highway space without costly court suits or loss of ratables? If solvency alone is our objective, then the answer may be yes, and perhaps in that case we should do away not only with parks, but with the statues in the parks—the historical figures of those who carved out our civilization for us; instead, perhaps we should reserve a space ten feet square in every major development and there mount on a marble pedestal the bulldozer that has come to symbolize this great new era; the bulldozer that buries our traditions and, if we do not discriminate better, may reduce our future as well as our past to rubble.

"Slowly it is dawning on people, I think, that when something must go, it might be better to lose a colorless ratable than a colorful tradition; that it may be more profitable in the long run to salvage a piece of our lives, a ballast for our civilization, than to reduce to the absolute minimum the size of a bond issue.

"These are the considerations that make the redevelopment and revitalization of a metropolitan area the monumental struggle that it is. And of all the conflicts that exist in redevelopment,

those in Boston are the sharpest and require the deepest soul-searching.

"No other city, it is said, has quite so difficult a financial problem.

"No other city needs new tax ratables so badly.

"In no other city does the prospect of rehabilitation promise so much.

"Yet, no city in the United States has so great a tradition which the bulldozer—and the bulldozer mentality—can eradicate so completely with one sweeping gesture.

". . . New structures should go up only when older ones cannot successfully be rehabilitated; and when it is necessary to replace an old structure that can't be rehabilitated, the redevelopers should recognize an obligation to put back a reasonable amount of interest as well as utility. But the really old structures, those that still have the smell of the Revolution about them, should stay. . . ."

BEAUTY IS ESSENTIAL IN PLANNING

From The Fresno *Bee*

The Downtown Idea Exchange of New York City said: "Just as man lives not by bread alone, downtown lives not by parking alone, nor cars alone, nor even business alone. Downtown lives by beauty too."

The argument between an unplanned and a planned downtown could not be stated better.

Downtown is not merely a network of traffic arteries and parking tiers and barren, sterile concrete walkways and merchandising houses.

All of it added together, a personality emerges. And that personality will be only as dramatic, as progressive as the total sum of its parts.

Unhappily too little attention is paid in American cities to planning, with beauty an ever-present consideration.

United States Senator Harrison A. Williams of New Jersey warned against the panic of gerrybuilding in the emergency created by exploding growth. There is too much wretched ugliness and squalor in planning, he admonished. He urged vision.

The New York chapters of the American Institute of Architects and the American Institute of Planners said: "Today growth too often brings only ugliness."

When beauty is ignored in planning, cities degenerate into splashes of chrome and asphalt and neon imitation; they emerge without identity or body, monotonous, impersonal and standardized.

Let this be quoted to the downtown merchant who in his expediency might be tempted to sacrifice beauty and character to satisfy the immediate nut-and-bolt demands brought on by growth: A synonym for beauty is attractiveness. Attractiveness literally means the power to attract. And that is exactly what beauty does for downtown; it attracts!

The source? Some little known town where they think small?

No. New York City, where the businessman has to think big to survive.

HEMPSTEAD

Heritage House, a 168-year-old structure owned by Hempstead, Long Island, N. Y., is serving as headquarters for urban renewal officials. The house was deeded to the village by prominent citizens. G. Russell Sunden, director of the urban renewal office, in extending an invitation to the public to visit the house, said, "Truly representing the heritage of Hempstead, this building functions in carrying forward this heritage through urban renewal."

EUROPE

Excerpts from the "Oneness of Planning" by Sir William Hoford, president of the Royal Institute of Architects, and delivered at the 93rd annual convention of the American Institute of Architects, Philadelphia, April 1961.

. . . The most intractable problems of pedestrian segregation are, of course, nearer the historic centers. Reconstruction after war damage has been slow and unenterprising in London, as compared with Rotterdam or Warsaw or Hanover . . . but there is one slight advantage in moving slowly, and that is that you can see more easily where you are going. The exasperating delays in the rebuilding of the Barbican area, and around St. Paul's, have at least given the public a chance to say what they don't want, and the architects an opportunity to demand more comprehensive programs and more enlightened patronage.

* * *

The architectural potential which can build up a new environment when it is given the chance, and which was in fact used, layer by layer, to construct the great cities which we now call historic, is today finding it harder and harder to get a hearing in these cities.

Rome, for example, is a city so rich in history and architectural association that one can visit it every year and never fully know it. Preservation and maintenance have done much for Rome in the last forty years, and sheer monumentality still overtops the slums and the traffic. But preservation is piecemeal; it is not comprehensive. It does not control the litter, neither the small litter of the automobile age—for example, in the Piazza del Popolo, or on top of the Spanish Steps—nor the gigantic litter of ribbon development and suburban sprawl which is gradually choking the historic city. There seem to be no multi-level public parking garages nor any recent buildings designed entirely to swallow their own and visitors' vehicles. But the parking sign is in nearly all streets and squares and parks; and every architectural view has a mechanical foreground. The "City" is beginning to disappear. Only in a few places, such as the Piazza of St. Peter's and the Piazza Navona, is civic design still recognizable. And only in limited new areas, such as the Olympic Village, with Nervi's Palazzetto and viaduct, and Lugli's [Nervi] hostel for foreign students near the Stadium on the other side of the Tiber, is the contemporary citizen given any idea of what the modern architect can do for him.

Excerpts from the "Culture of the City" by Bruno Zevi, delivered at the 93rd annual convention of the American Institute of Architects.

. . . in many American cities, urban renewal, so far as I could see, means demolishing, with bulldozer technique, an urban section in order to rebuild it according to contemporary criteria. Often, at the end of a carpet of old houses, we see a series of new tall buildings, in the shape of towers or elongated prisms. Such contrast of dimension, structure and character is sometimes successful, as it attains a surrealistic beauty. But can isolated towers or slabs constitute the entire semantics of urban renewal and offer a consistent method of re-designing urban America? Don't they sometimes lacerate the structure and the texture of the city, depriving it, together with the slums, of some of its historical and social assets? A city atmosphere means interchange, movement, continuity, and the architecture for it cannot always be so violently discontinuous.

This is true especially of city sections reserved for pedestrians. There, we should have a type of architecture consonant not only in scale but also in quality to the pedestrian's tempo. In fact, too many pedestrian's centers in Europe look artificial and unconvincing because they do not have an architectural form of their own.

But urban renewal becomes a much more difficult operation when it is applied to monumental towns. In Italy, we are almost paralyzed by this problem. Opinions strongly diverge. I happen to be Secretary General of the Italian Institute of Planners, Vice President of the Italian Institute of Architecture, and University Professor of Architectural History. It is more than enough to give me a case of split personality about urban renewal. Historians would not change a stone of the past, some architects would like to clear everything up, planners change their opinion all too often. In the meantime Palermo has become socially degraded to the point that only the "Report" by Danilo Dolci, perhaps the best living Italian who recently visited this country, succeeded in depicting. Venice is going to pieces, and its new town plan just approved does not offer any long-range solution. Milan, yes, is totally renewed, with the result that it is perhaps the ugliest city in Europe, a city where the Duomo and St. Ambrogio are the only buildings which look out of place and tune. In the next five years the historical center of Rome is going to be renewed, and the question is, once again: How to do it?

I think that this problem too concerns all of us. In spite of the differences between American and European towns, a philosophy flexible enough to be applied to American cities quite probably might work also for Europe.

* * *

I want you to know that whatever you do in re-designing urban America has a great impact on Europe. When the plan for Fort Worth was published, there was in Italy a sincere enthusiasm: We felt that something had been done for Texas which was instrumental and meaningful also for us. The same can be said of the Golden Gateway Redevelopment in San Francisco, of your experiences in Detroit, in Pittsburgh and in many other cities. . . .

Fifteen years ago, I had the honor to speak at the Convention of The American Institute of Planners which was held in Cleveland. This was in 1946. The title of my address was: "Town Planning as an Instrument of an American Foreign Policy." I meant what it implied. Unfortunately, during the last fifteen years, this instrument was little used, and American foreign policy was not always brilliant and successful. Something, however, is in the air, and I feel once again that the architects' contribution can be determining. Town-making will perhaps be the final battleground between the East and the West. In an affluent society, the quantitative competition is going to become less and less important. The final battle will be fought on quality, and here city designers and architects will bear the greatest responsibility.

BRIDGEPORT

In its enthusiasm for its "new look," Professor Patrick Horsbrugh of the architectural department of the University of Nebraska advises Bridgeport not to be disrespectful of its landmarks. Buildings of historic value and architectural charm should be retained. City Hall, the County Court House and the Barnum Museum are among the buildings Professor Horsbrugh recommends as "definitely worth keeping."

Courthouse In The News

By Alan Burnham, AIA, director, American Architectural Archive

The Jefferson Market Courthouse, perennially in the public eye, tells its own story in headlines perhaps better than we could ever tell it, having had such distinguished reporters as the New York *Times*, the New York *Herald Tribune*, *The Villager*, Village *Voice*, Greenwich Village *News* and the Chelsea-Clinton *News*.

It all began back in 1956 when, in an article entitled "Architectural Heritage" (New York *Herald Tribune*, February 6, 1956), three outstanding landmarks were referred to: The Stuyvesant Apartment, The Tenth Street Studio Building and The Jefferson Market Courthouse. This led to a "Talk of the Town" article in the *New Yorker* followed by an avalanche of headline articles in the papers, ranging from the first efforts by Margot Gayle to get the clock relighted and running once more, down to Mayor Wagner's endorsement of the idea of making it a branch of the New York Public Library. Today success is close at hand with only the Board of Estimate and a few other hurdles yet to take.

This is the story of how a community can rise up to defend and make useful a much-loved landmark in its midst, fighting against today's all-pervading economic pressures and against the political machinations of a great city. If the victory is finally won, this galaxy of headlines will some day tell us how and why:

FAMOUS COURTHOUSE STILL IN THE NEWS

JEFFERSON COURT PLAN BOARD TOPIC

UP SPIRAL STAIRS TO STUDY CLOCK

HUSSEY GIVES PLAN TO REPLACE PRISON

VILLAGE MOVEMENT HAS TIMELY GOAL

CLEANS AND CRANKS THE TOWN CLOCK

A HISTORIAN'S EYE VIEW OF THE COURTHOUSE

COURT-PRISON FATE UP TO RESIDENTS

TENTH STREET CLOCK RUNS BUT HANDS ARE TIED: $300 WILL CUT KNOT

VILLAGE "GOTHIC" DEFIES WRECKERS

JEFFERSON MARKET COURT URGED AS LIBRARY BRANCH

SPARE THAT MONSTROSITY

CITY PUTS JEFF MARKET COURTHOUSE ON BLOCK

1960

PUBLISHER BIDS FOR JEFF MARKET

DRIVE BEGINS TO PRESERVE COURTHOUSE

VILLAGE LANDMARK MAY BE LIBRARY

OLD "SPHINX" CLOCK AT TENTH STREET GETS NEW LEASE ON TIME

YULE CARD SALES TO HELP KEEP HISTORIC CLOCK

CLOCK IN THE "VILLAGE" RUNNING AGAIN

1961

PLANS MADE TO INSTALL LIBRARY IN OLD COURT

ALL-OUT PUSH OPENS FOR LIBRARY

VILLAGERS FIGHT TO SAVE BUILDING

VILLAGE GROUP WINS STAY FOR LANDMARK

JEFFERSON COURTHOUSE OFF SALE LIST

Jefferson Market Courthouse

THIS VANISHING VILLAGE, NO. 21 IN SERIES—JEFFERSON MARKET COURTHOUSE

RALLY FAVORS COURTHOUSE LIBRARY

HUGE CROWD AT COURTHOUSE RALLY

VILLAGE OPENS FIGHT FOR "OLD JEFF"

"OLD JEFF" ESCAPES THE BULLDOZER

VILLAGE LANDMARK TO BE A LIBRARY

WAGNER SUPPORTS VILLAGE LIBRARY

A REPRIEVE FOR "OLD JEFF"

VILLAGE LOVES ITS "OLD JEFF," RED FACE, BALKY CLOCK AND ALL

(*Editor's Note:* VILLAGE SCOUTS SLATE COURTHOUSE CLEANUP is the latest headline. Girl Scouts and Brownies in the Greenwich Village area turned out en masse with scrub pails and mops to clean up the sidewalks and steps at Old Jeff. Pigeons had found the unoccupied building a favorite resting place. The horse trough at the north end of the red brick building also got a face-washing.)

GREAT AMERICAN CITIES

Of her new volume, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 458 pp., index, $5.95), Jane Jacobs writes, "This book is an attack on current city planning and rebuilding. It is also, and mostly, an attempt to introduce new principles of city planning and rebuilding, different and even opposite from those now taught in everything from schools of architecture and planning to the Sunday supplements and women's magazines.

"There is a wistful myth that if only we had enough money to spend — the figure is usually put at a hundred billion dollars — we could wipe out all our slums in ten years, reverse decay in the great, dull, gray belts that were yesterday's and day-before-yesterday's suburbs, anchor the wandering middle class and its wandering tax money, and even solve the traffice problem.

"But look what we have built with the first several billions: Low-income projects that become worse centers of delinquency, vandalism and general social hopelessness than the slums they were supposed to replace. Middle-income housing projects which are truly marvels of dullness and regimentation, sealed against any buoyancy or vitality of city life. Luxury housing projects that mitigate their inanity, or try to, with a vapid vulgarity. Cultural centers that are unable to support a good bookstore. Civic centers that are avoided by everyone but bums, who have fewer choices of a loitering place than others. Commercial centers that are lack-luster imitations of standardized suburban chain-store shopping. Promenades that go from no place to nowhere and have no promenaders. Expressways that eviscerate great cities. This is not the rebuilding of cities. This is the sacking of cities."

Richmond City Hall

RICHMOND

"A gem of architecture, outside and inside . . . a showpiece, tall, stately, symmetrical and refreshing to the eye, especially after one has seen the many architectural monstrosities in this country now doing duty as city hall." This was the Richmond *Dispatch's* description of the then-new Richmond City Hall in February 1894.

Current Civic Center plans call for its demolition, to be replaced by a mall. "There are widely divergent opinions," writes Mrs. Ralph Catterall of the Valentine Museum, "as to the merit of this proposal and some architects of national reputation as well as many Richmond citizens have expressed the view that the City Hall represents a period, is first rate of its kind, and should be preserved."

The construction of the city hall brought about the demolition of another city hall on the same site, built 1814-16 and designed by Robert Mills. The present city hall was designed by E. E. Myers of Detroit and built by day labor. Stone columns and blocks were cut on the site by hand. The cost had been estimated at $300,000, but totaled $1,370,000.

"Riding into Richmond today," writes an editor in the Norfolk *Virginia-Pilot*, "from the South over the Petersburg Turnpike, one sees that the building has grace and dignity and character where it stands in the midst of modernity, and seems to have lost its French accent. It lends color to the skyline as it looks toward the turnpike, which becomes a bit of a skyway where it enters Richmond. Even if it is not pretty, the City Hall speaks pleasantly for a solid, rich and very handsome city.

"'Prettiness,' or classicalism is not the test that should always be applied by those who would preserve the landmarks of Virginia cities. Character and period significance are valid tests also. Contrast is always wanted.

"Virginia cities are about to undergo a process of rejuvenation. But if they lost the accent of the past they would lose something meaningful and important. Old buildings sometimes hold echoes."

DOWNTOWN IS FOR PEOPLE

The pedestrian's world needs man-made spaces in which he can walk around: sides he can touch . . . arcaded, enclosed views, windows out on the city from the pedestrian's world . . . drama and surprise.

—*Fortune* Magazine, April 1958

BALTIMORE

. . . The Shot Tower Redevelopment Project illustrates the direct application of city planning to preservation. Acres of ruined slum houses and obsolete commercial buildings are being

demolished for a new commercial center, but the plan takes good care to preserve two interesting landmarks: the Shot Tower and St. Vincent de Paul's Church. While it would be unthinkable to destroy these buildings, the underlying principle of this plan is the effective use of landmarks, properly landscaped, to relieve monotony and strengthen neighborhood identity.

An even better example of this approach is the Master Landscape Plan for the Central Business District prepared by Sasaki, Walker and Associates this year. The concept was originally proposed by the Planning Council of the Greater Baltimore Committee in 1959. The plan recognizes "the compelling urgency of reversing the trend of urban decay and blight," and recommends "a total approach which provides for visual aspects related to funtional aspects" of the environment.

Two spaces were of special interest, the Battle Monument and the Court House Plaza. The Battle Monument is of the greatest symbolic importance to Baltimore as well as architecturally significant. Designed by Maximilian Godefroy, it was dedicated in 1815 as a memorial to those who died in the defense of the city in 1814. America's first war memorial, it is the official symbol of Baltimore as seen on the City Seal. Formerly the monument was the center of civic affairs, but now it is an island in a major one-way street, obscured by an ugly traffic light. The space behind it is used for automobile parking by a few government officials. Not long ago it had fallen so low in esteem that there were suggestions to move the monument out of the way of traffic, thus sacrificing "harmonious continuity" to the trivial convenience of motorists.

The solution offered by Sasaki, Walker and Associates is the deliberate recapture of the aesthetic and symbolic values of the Battle Monument by establishing a small park around it. If the plan is carried out, it will be an extraordinary event in planning history—*the defeat of the automobile by aesthetic forces!* The important thing is that this plan represents progress. There was never a park around the monument before. It is a modern improvement to downtown Baltimore, and it incorporates the preservation of an old symbolic structure as part of the modern design.

The proposal by the Baltimore Chapter, AIA, for an official "Civic Design Board" is an important step in the right direction for preservation. The purpose of this board is stated to be "that the City of Baltimore will develop in good order, good taste and with due regard for the public interests involved." This is as good a case for the preservation of old buildings as anything I have said. If we are to conserve our architectural heritage in a meaningful way, it must be done in these terms and with the full cooperation of architects, city planners, historians and public officials who believe in the "harmonious continuity" of our civilization.

—Wilbur Harvey Hunter, Jr., director of Baltimore's Peale Museum. from *Architects' Report,* Chesapeake Bay Region, AIA, Spring 1961

Baltimore's Charles Center is magnificently different . . . it is meant to bring activities to a focus rather than distribute them. The plan builds on the strengths of Baltimore . . . Charles Center will provide a series of small open spaces, and because the bulk and height of towers will be limited, the spaces will be light and sunny. Another big reason the plan is so good is that it has been disciplined by a regard for economics.

—*Fortune* Magazine, May 1958

THE VISUAL QUALITY OF CITIES

Excerpts from article by Walter McQuade, AIA, Journal *of the American Institute of Architects, March 1961*

There are so many visual qualities to save in our cities which tell their great heartiness and diversity. These scenes are mentioned so often they're cliché: The byways of Greenwich Village, the grandeur of Michigan Avenue, the sobriety of Beacon Hill, the charm of the French Quarter, the intricacies of a hundred waterfronts, the bustle of scores of wholesale districts. We can all name dozens of elements of various cities which have bewitched us, amused us, and at least a few which have moved us deeply, simply as visual objects. For those of us raised in suburbs or town, the cities have been classless postgraduate universities.

CITY HALL

A few of us decided in a spontaneous meeting the other morning that our old monstrosity of a City Hall had better be torn down and replaced right now. In a few years it will be historic, and we will be stuck with it for all time.—Burton Hillis, January 1962 *Better Homes and Gardens*

NEW FRONTIERS

The cities are the new frontiers of our civilization. It is in the cities that the exciting and challenging developments of the second half of the twentieth century will occur. It is in the cities that our way of life will be put to the test, and will either succeed or fail.—Richardson Dilworth, Mayor of the City of Philadelphia

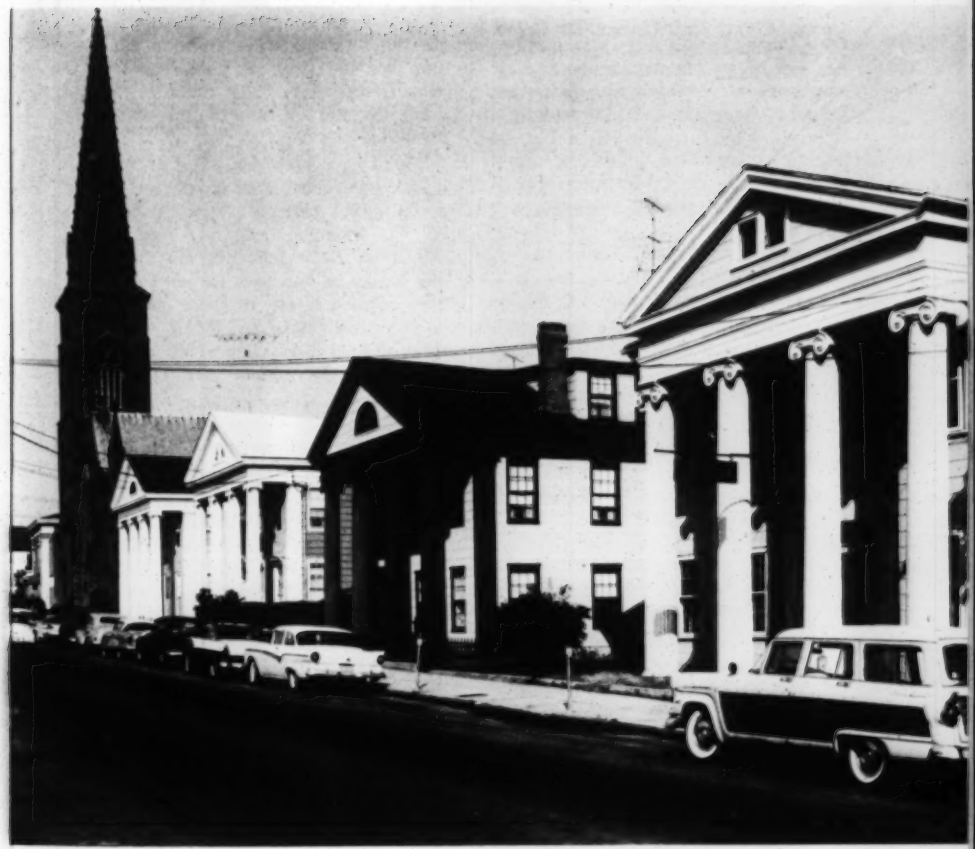
NEW LONDON

"All efforts should be made to preserve what we now have, and not permit wanton and wholesale destruction of intact, tax-paying properties," declared the New London County Historical Society in a report to the Redevelopment Agency. "We have witnessed all too recently the destruction of the Jedediah Huntington House (1790). This important landmark is now irretrievably gone."

The report recommended saving a group of historic structures from demolition in the city's urban renewal program and called for the inclusion of a few small open spaces to which historic buildings could be moved, if they were threatened.

It also urged that the sector involved be designated a historic district under a law passed at the last session of the Connecticut General Assembly. "We are, after all, the temporary custodians of these treasures," stated the Society. "It is our duty to hand them on to our heirs unharmed and unchanged. Future generations need more than the contents of books to instill in them veneration for the character and work of our ancestors.

"We need all the material mementoes that we can preserve for their visual impressions. For example, the houses of Whale Oil Row are not only specimens of great architectural beauty, but in addition, they perpetuate the memory of the rugged character of our forefathers who dominated New London's great whaling era."



Whale Oil Row, New London, Conn.

Is There Preservation Planning for the City of Tomorrow?

Panelists' response at the fifteenth annual meeting and preservation conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, October 13, New York City

DOUGLAS HASKELL, AIA, editor, *Architectural Forum*

Not being a veteran, as some of you are, of many battles, I have to speak to you out of an oblique perspective. It may have some value to you to get looked at by a friend. I like your title. It seems to me to be high time that the historic preservation movement looked to the future. This may sound like a paradox. But, *tempora mutantis, nos et mutamur in illis* is the only Latin that I can remember. Times change and we with them. The time has come for historic preservation to take on the scope and breadth which alone can insure its survival in a time of mass conduct. We cannot win by fighting everlasting rearguard actions, meeting crisis after crisis by heroic and single-handed action, even though there is no discounting many of the victories. They have been heroic. We shall all be smarter not to have to be heroic. With less need for heroism we may be more effective.

Let's see whether there is some truth in the following evaluation:

May I suggest that historic preservation is about to achieve major importance because a civilized objective is indispensable to the nation in a $25 billion volume of economic activity based on a stock of construction valued —in depreciated terms—at half a TRILLION dollars.

It may not be known to all of you, who have bravely fought for building after building, and monument after monument, what a huge economic force you can make yourselves the leaders of

Continued on page 172

LACHLAN F. BLAIR, planning consultant

If I have to answer frankly the question "Is there Preservation Planning for the City of Tomorrow?" I have got to say, "Not much!" Certainly there is *not enough* preservation planning.

There have been dribs and drabs of it in a good number of cities, but in a pretty spotty pattern across the country. For example, there have been over 900 urban renewal projects launched in our nation in the past 12 years. Perhaps a good dozen of these have involved considerate treatment of historic preservation. There are several dozen more that should have.

There are, however, enough good examples so that I can be quite confident in saying that there *can* be a truly successful preservation planning effort in almost any city that wants to have it. Within the past handful of years, we have seen the teaming up of technicians and promoters interested in the cause of historic preservation on the one side and those concerned with broader aspects of city planning and development on the other. This teaming up has already shown significant results and gives promise of being a very fruitful joint effort in the years ahead. You will see a lot happen in cities during the next few years. The pace of urban renewal operations in the United States under new Congressional authorizations will be three times what it has been since the slum clearance program started. Congress has made changes in these programs which will be favorable

Continued on page 174

JOHN R. SEARLES, JR., executive director, District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency

We have had significant and successful private restoration and preservation efforts in Washington, in Georgetown and Capitol Hill. Also, we are in the process of renewing a large section of the city; this is Southwest, Washington.

I propose to briefly describe how the urban renewal procedures operated generally and specifically with respect to this project and also the special steps which we took to preserve buildings of historical architectural significance.

The Southwest area of Washington is about one square mile in size and lies between the Capitol and the Washington Channel of the Potomac River. Its location is most convenient and important, for it is close to Capitol Hill, the central business district, and the Federal Triangle. Washington applied for and received funds for surveys and plans of this area at different times during the early 1950's. With these funds, all structures were inspected and their condition classified, detailed information was obtained about all the families living in the area who would have to move, land was valued and other factual studies were made. Also general plans were made for a new street system, land use allocations and the location of various public structures.

The surveys clearly demonstrated a need for renewal, for the Southwest contained literally the worst housing in Washington; various plans, indicating what could be done, were considered over a period of time. Ultimately plans were adopted by the National Capital Planning Commission and the District of Columbia Commissioners approved them. The D.C. Redevelopment Land Agency, which functions as the urban renewal agency for the national capital, applied to the Housing and Home Finance Agency for a loan and such grants as would be necessary to defray two-thirds of the public cost. An amount was allocated and at the present time approximately $100 million has been spent. Much of this has gone for the purchase of real estate.

The first step in executing an urban renewal plan is the valuation and purchase of real estate by condemnation or friendly negotiations. The next step is the relocation of families and businesses. This has been done with the greatest care in order to minimize hardship and to insure insofar as possible that families living in a blighted area would move to a standard neighborhood and make a suitable adjustment to new surroundings. The final step in urban redevelopment is the sale or lease of new lots for development in accordance with the publicly-approved plan. In this last step of development for private redevelopment, local redevelopment agencies have substantial power to control architectural design. This power is generally utilized by creating competitive situations and then selecting the developer on the basis of the architectural excellence of his proposal.

Developers are committed by contract to provide rebuilding as rapidly as possible. In Southwest Washington approximately sixty new sites have been sold or leased, the majority leased. The remainder is being placed on the market at the rate of approximately one site every month. Much construction is completed; more is going on.

In conjunction with the surveys on structures which were made in the planning stage, the Agency consulted

with the Preservation Committee of the American Institute of Architects, Washington, D. C. Chapter, and arranged for a canvass of structures in the area to point out those of historical significance. A report on this activity was published and is available if you are interested. Some structures recommended for preservation from the standpoint of the general interest were lost in major public improvements, such as the Expressway. The redevelopment agency and the urban renewal program were powerless to preserve these structures.

There are, however, four handsome and historical buildings located on N Street in Southwest Washington. These were constructed about 1800 by John Greenleaf, a spectulative developer of his day and partner of Lawrence Washington, who was brother of George. These buildings are the Law House, the Barney House, the Washington Lewis House and the Wheat Row.

Special provisions were written into the Redevelopment Plan to permit the Redevelopment Land Agency to preserve these buildings, if possible. No funds were specifically provided for this purpose, but the Redevelopment Land Agency was encouraged and authorized to sell the structures to a developer who would preserve them. The buildings were, therefore, preserved in the execution stage and kept in use as long as possible in order to avoid vandalism and damage due to weather and other causes as a result of being empty. When the two parcels were offered for lease or sale, the Agency's specifications called for the maintenance of the structures.

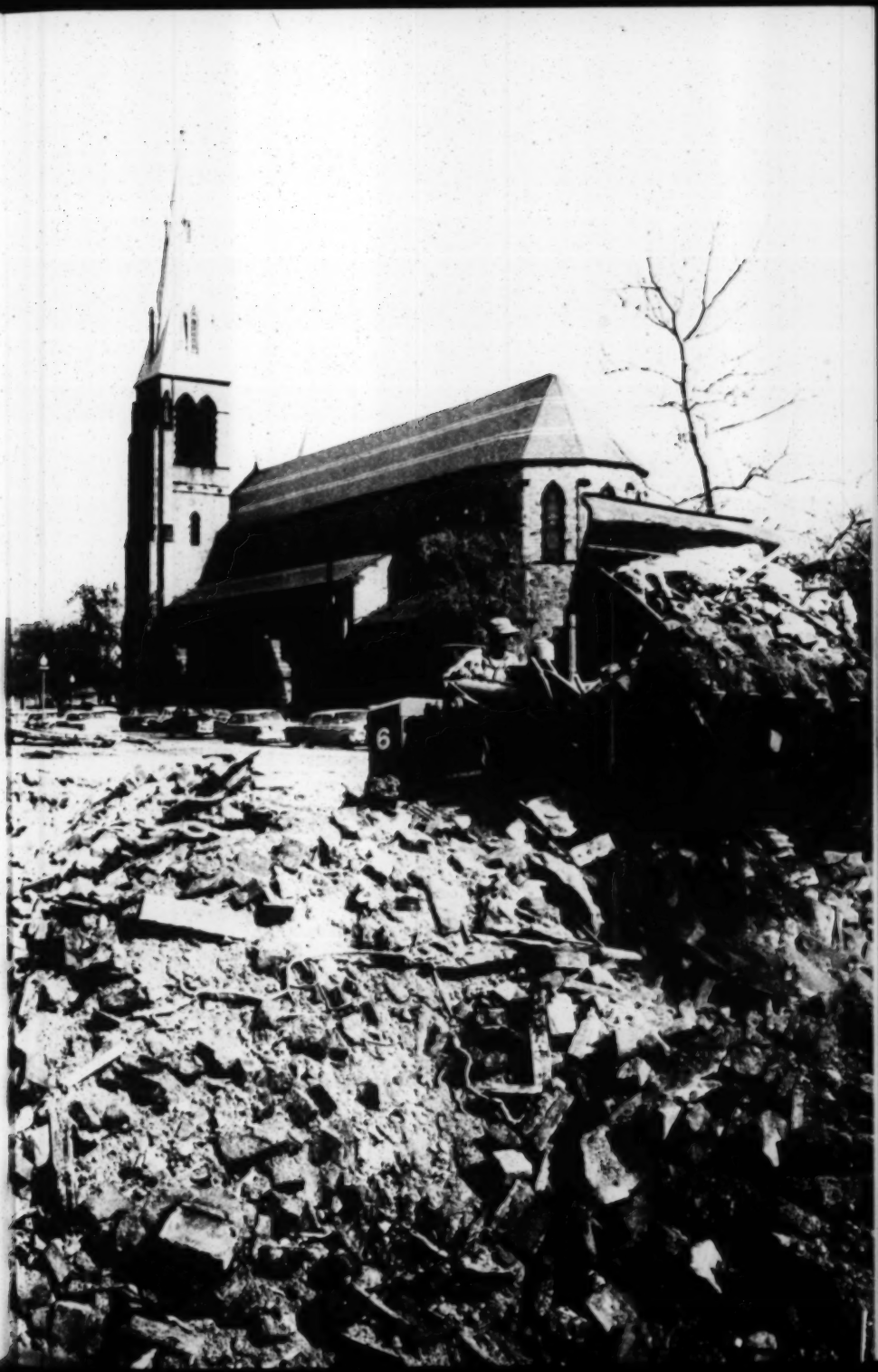
One parcel which includes Wheat Row, Washington Lewis House and Barney House is about to be sold to a local corporation who has agreed to preserve the exteriors of the structures and place them in residential use. The new design will be integrated with the design of the old structures. The development will be called Harbour Square.

The plot containing the Law House was the subject of a competition held last summer. To assist in selecting the developer as a result of this competition, the Agency asked five distinguished architects and planners, four from outside of the Washington area, to serve as a panel. The panel reviewed the eleven proposals received by the Agency, which incidentally had the names of the sponsors concealed, and considered the over-all excellence of the design proposed. In this consideration, they gave great weight to the handling of the Law House in the over-all project.

As a result of these efforts, we have been successful in saving four buildings in Southwest Washington. These were the only four buildings recommended for preservation to us in areas which were to go to private development.

I do not believe that it would have been possible to move the site of the Expressway to permit the saving of the two or three houses that were located in that part of the urban renewal area. I do believe, however, that if the community truly values historical structures, it will make urban renewal an effective tool for their preservation and restoration.

St. Dominic's Church, S.W. Washington.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The residence of Rochester's first mayor will be adapted to office use by the Bureau of Municipal Research. The building is owned by the Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York. In return for using the 1837 house for 20 years without rent, the bureau has pledged to preserve its architectural beauty and to restore, repair and maintain it.

HASKELL, *continued from page 168*

—nay you must make yourselves the leaders of.

Not for one minute shall I contend that yours is anything but a cultural aim and a cultural force, and its values can never be reached, let alone measured, by a dollar yardstick. Nevertheless if the historic preservation movement is languishing in some places this is for lack of oxygen, and the needed oxygen can come to it only as it is an integral part of the general health and general welfare of the nation. Conversely, economic activity, though measured in dollars, never can persist anywhere in a state of health unless it stands in the service of a civilization with cultural objectives.

The United States possesses a total building stock, a stock of used buildings, rated at an economic value in the range of $500 billion or more, which means roughly *half a trillion dollars.* This, I repeat, represents all existing construction, all inherited buildings, in their depreciated value. Our new construction every decade is coming to be of the same economic value, but the volume is far less because the value, as measured, does not include depreciation. So those children who were born during the minute I have been talking to you are inheritors of that much

value in what we call *historical* buildings. This is the vast stock that you winnow your *historic* treasures from.

Now regarding this vast unsorted building stock, will you permit me to make a few pertinent observations:

1. The vast majority are going to be preserved for a time in any case.

2. The total sum that will be spent on those that are preserved, spent on repairing, maintaining, remodeling, expanding, on rebuilding this vast undifferentiated stock will be in the range of $25 billion every year during the next years.

3. This comprehensive operation is so unstudied and uncontrolled that the United States does not even possess figures showing how much is demolished either dollar-wise or physically. Not until February of this year did a single architectural magazine recollect this vast field of preservation and rebuilding—all were concentrated on new construction. In February of this year *Architectural Forum*, my magazine, instated the first regular department devoted to this.

4. Meanwhile, it would be insane to think that the United States could ever get along without preservation as a major part of its total construction program. Never ever could all our needs be covered by tearing down everything and engaging in new construction.

I tell you all this partly to get you to swell your chests and realize the importance of historic preservation in the comprehensive picture that *all* citizens must be systematically concerned with. Now in this total picture your share is the *princely* part. You deal with the capstone of the whole comprehensive structure of preservation. But don't forget that no prince is a prince except as he is the prince and leader of a nation.

My contention to you is that the true large-scale nature of the operation which you culturally head, demands that measures taken be at community scale and in the name of the whole community, and with the authority of the whole community. Such important matters cannot be left helter-skelter.

The only politics that I wish to deal in is the politics of a cultural and physical *continuity* for this whole nation. In this context I don't care, and you need not be too concerned, whether you believe in urban renewal and rehabilitation as a federally aided enterprise or whether you want it to be strictly local, or a combination. But community-wide, at least, it has to be, and therefore is coming to be. To give historic preservation the needed scope, power and authority, it has to be attached to programs that mark out officially what is to be preserved and why and how, as part of the comprehensive city picture. Nothing short of this will let preservation keep its head above the bulldozers.

The watchword is "continuity." In the tight times ahead when we have so many other burdens to bear, the United States can no longer afford the inefficiency of its totally uncorrelated past building efforts. Individualism must continue to reign, but an individualism in sensible voluntary agreement that there has to be leadership and coordination.

Continuity was the watchword that we at *Forum* found as the key word when we reasoned out this aspect of total United States civilization. "America," we said, "lacks a controlling philosophy which considers its history as a continuity, its cities as a continuity, its architecture as a continuity and the life cycle of the individual structure as one, to be planned as a continuity from the very beginning of each undertaking. The cities of America are full of 'fresh starts,' and so is its architecture, and so is its building technology. The consequence

is too much building that disrupts instead of furthering city organization, too much new architecture that is not adjusted to the city picture, and new building that is not fitted to efficient conversion, not to speak of remodeling that fits with nothing."

Now here is where you come in, for the service of historic preservation to the cause of continuity is the highest. Historic preservation furnishes the capstone. I cannot much improve on the way I said it in *Forum* some years ago:

"Millions of Americans are planning their next tour to Europe or Asia to look at old cities and beautiful monuments. . . . Yet the very things that Americans adore abroad they destroy systematically at home. Old buildings are broken up in the United States as fast as used packing boxes to make way for new ones. The pyramids, having already stood through five thousand years, have a better chance of rounding out another five thousand than any five-year-old American masterpiece has of rounding out the decade. The loss we endure through this is not merely sentimental. What we lose is our funded experience. Just as the best school of architecture is the masterly building, so the only effective repository of architectural ideas and of architectural beauty is a standing one. Architecture is an art whose masterpieces cannot be stored away like paintings or reproduced centuries later like poetry or music. The art lives on in used buildings; they alone can carry it. Without them we are perpetual juveniles, starting over and over, a nation of children, a people without a memory."

One more thing: Please don't consider that history has stopped short at some point in the past. Live and let live must be our motto. Preservation of the best in the past must not be accompanied by legal strictures which compel architects to imitate the past and cut off their own opportunity to create history anew.

In closing I will not pretend that my suggestions leave you nothing to fight about. You can just imagine how large-scale preservation can be subverted for the sake of quick-buck commercial enterprises and phoney tourist attractions. These are problems that you will have to meet, but at least preservation will exist, and exist at large scale. I am not offering you peace from the wars, but saying to you pick the big war where you can win a big victory.

BLAIR, *continued from page 168*

toward historic preservation, because of an increasing emphasis on conservation of neighborhoods and rehabilitation of buildings. Urban renewal, whether it involves federal money or not, is one of the strongest allies of historic preservation. It should be recognized and used as such by your local groups.

There have been some new techniques worked out for preservation planning. They are far from being perfect, but I would like to tell you of some principles that seem to work.

It is desirable for a city to have a distinctive and recognizable character which distinguishes it from other communities and helps to build civic spirit, interest and loyalty among its people.

This character can be a variety of things, some of them in the physical form and patterns in which the city developed: its buildings, its street layout, its topography and the history

of its people. The more that is carried forward in the structures and spaces that figure in the community history, the more the character of that community is going to remain distinctive, and the greater the civic spirit that can be generated.

The distinctive physical character of a city is not found in individual buildings; rather, it is in the relationship among buildings, the grouping of structures, the continuity of a block-long facade along a street. It is also in the settings of buildings; the landscape, the background, the walkways and the scale and pattern of traffic activity in the streets.

Historic preservation cannot be thought of without fitting it into the *total fabric* of the city. The first principle calls for an *area* approach—for dealing not just with individual buildings but with substantial sections of your city. Secondly, it also calls for dealing with many interests and groups, official and otherwise. These two principles were applied in the College Hill Study in Providence, and I think are essential to any successful preservation planning.

The College Hill Study was completed about two years ago and was sponsored by the Providence Preservation Society, the City Plan Commission and the Federal Urban Renewal Administration. It focused attention on a section of the city which is rich in structures of historic and architectural merit, and stimulated both private and governmental action toward a sensible combination of preservation and urban renewal. There was close involvement of the political leadership of the community in the course of the planning effort.

Nine major recommendations were made in the College Hill Study. This volume is now virtually out of print, but we hope to have a new edition published soon. In the meantime, there is available a small progress report which summarizes what has happened on College Hill in the past two years. Impressive progress has been made on each of the nine major recommendations.

There is a permanent "Committee to Implement the College Hill Study." Included in its membership are not just Preservation Society people, but city officials, representatives of the churches and colleges in the area and the neighborhood groups in College Hill as well. These groups have been involved since the start of the early study work back in 1957. The committee is now actively watching over the detailed planning of an urban renewal project, designed to meet the problems in seriously blighted sections of the Hill. This project will provide for a close but harmonious mixing of old and new structures, for College Hill is not intended to become a museum, but a strong and lively part of the community, changing and improving over the years.

Providence waterfront 1959

Benefit St. houses, before and after, Providence

An enabling act for historic area zoning was passed by the Rhode Island General Assembly immediately upon completion of the study, and ordinances have been adopted, not only in Providence, but in two of the other towns in the state as well. The Historic District Commission, in its initial year's operation, already had a few of the fights that go with administration of any type of governmental regulations. In my view, these are but examples of the fact that we have established an orderly procedure for focusing public attention on any major change in use or character of structures within an area which has been legally defined, on the basis of objective architectural surveys, as worth preserving and protecting.

It is essential that there be objectivity in this kind of survey, which involves not just the listing of old monuments but their evaluation as well, coupled with careful determination of the boundaries within which it is important to the community that the general character of streets be protected and enhanced.

How can we obtain objectivity in this regard? On College Hill we developed a very simple kind of score card on which were added together individual judgments on these points:

1. The historic significance of a building: whether it was associated with an important figure in the distant or even recent past.

2. The structure's architectural merit or significance as an example of its style; and we have good examples of many styles in College Hill, ranging from early Georgian to contemporary.

3. The buildings' importance to neighborhood integrity or character, its relationship to other structures: whether it reinforces their worth or detracts from them.

4. The extent to which the design has been allowed to deteriorate: whether there has been tasteful or wasteful use of the original building.

5. A broad judgment as to the physical condition of the individual building, its grounds and its environment, lending weight to the financial implications of preservation or restoration.

Each of these factors was weighted differently, with history and architectural worth counting most heavily, for a possible total of 100 points.

If the scores obtained from a survey of this sort are used with discretion, they can be of great help in determining the extent of an area to be subjected to legal measures for preservation.

Of comparable importance, however, is the use of such a survey to help in informing the public and in promoting an understanding of the quality of buildings we have.

Another of our College Hill recommendations was for the development of a tourist trail—a "mile of history"—with route markers and individual markers on the buildings. The Providence Preservation Society has placed such markers on all buildings of quality in the College Hill area. This is one of the simplest, but one of the most vital steps to be taken. Many people can feel instinctively that a building is nice; but it takes relative sophistication to prove that it is so. If a building is important architecturally or historically, we should make this fact known—not just in the history books filed on the library shelves but to any people that walk down the streets. If nothing else, this will help to ensure that an important building will not be overlooked by the field worker making notes for the planning of an urban renewal or highway project. He is going to think twice about how he scores a building with a plaque on the corner.

The interest of outsiders in the historic and architectural significance of

local buildings is something which has helped considerably to foster official recognition and support in Providence. Since the College Hill report was published, we have seen a steady stream of architects, preservationists, planners, historians, and garden variety tourists walking our Mile of History to admire not only the handsome architectural heritage but also the dramatic restoration efforts that have taken place. Within recent years, more than thirty Federal period houses in College Hill have been privately restored, about half of these grouped in one section. Many Rhode Islanders are looking to College Hill as a highly desirable place to live.

It is not enough just to have a survey of what is important architecturally in an area. This has to be one of the essential factors in the total planning for the area. The official planning agencies in any city, which are almost all professionally staffed, are becoming more and more concerned with the total subject of esthetics and the visual aspect and physical form of cities. Historic architecture plays practically the most important role in determining the distinctive character of the individual city. It should be just as important a factor in shaping the future form of the city as any of the other factors which customarily are studied in the planning process; such as traffic volumes, residential densities, systems of utilities, and patterns of land use. All of these need to be brought together to develop a sound plan for the future, and there needs to be added to them—and is being added to them in many cities across the country—an analysis of the architectural, the scenic, the esthetic, the visual aspect of our cities. No planning should be done today without one of the basic studies being a mapping of what is distinctive architecturally and scenically about the community, and a conscious effort to design a system of landmarks, walkways, traffic routings and other elements that is visually satisfying as well as efficient. Much new work is being done in this regard in the universities and in some of the larger planning agencies, but it is filtering down to smaller communities, as well.

The total fabric of our cities is woven from many different threads; social, economic, physical and political ones among them. Perhaps the most important is the last—the political one which basically determines whether anything really happens. To ensure that your interest in the preservation of historic architecture is adequately represented in the planning and urban renewal process, you need to team up, not just with the professionals in our field but with the garden clubs and many other agencies that are concerned with the physical form and visual aspect of our cities. You need to strengthen your members and demonstrate that this is not just a highbrow interest.

The key to a successful preservation planning effort is for the preservationists and the planners to join forces to work *on*—and *with*—the politicians, the people who make the real decisions—the city councilmen, the mayors and the other political leaders. With an objective and orderly approach, it is not difficult to develop an understanding on the part of these officials that history today is a red-hot item on the market, and the growing interest in it as a national pastime will last far beyond the present Civil War Centennial. It is something that must be reckoned with by architects, by planners and by public officials. If they are alert, they will recognize the historic area preservation cause as one which has real economic and vote-getting impact, and you will be on the road to having concrete accomplishment.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

In a recent speech to the Baltimore Life Insurance Company, Lewis Mumford contrasted the "urban rubbish heaps we now confront" with Venice and Amsterdam as "perhaps the high-water mark of town planning during the last 1000 years."

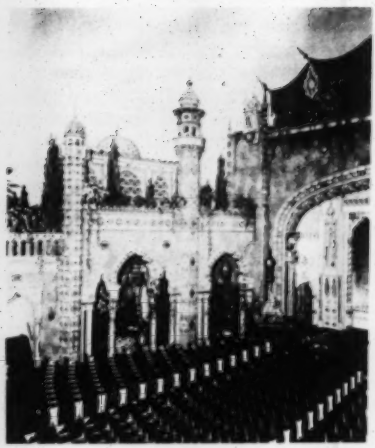
". . . The order and beauty they created in Venice and Amsterdam evoked in their citizens that love and pride and civic patriotism which is always the best preservative against neglect, blight, disorder or ill-considered, premature replacement. . . . What was the secret of this remarkable achievement? . . . They were not troubled, these Venetians, with absentee citizenship. They did not congregate in a single part of the city where the upper class lived. In order to serve on the council of 600, each member had to live in the parish that he represented so that he was in touch with the lowest order of his neighbors as well as with his own circle. Perhaps I should end my talk here with a single injunction as to your social responsibilities—come back to the city! Make it good enough for yourselves to live in! That would be a valuable piece of advice in almost any American city. * * *

". . . And it was only when the men of business lost their sense of social responsibility to the city as a whole, when they begrudged making safe investments at low returns, when they ceased to support heavy taxes for municipal improvements, that the whole structure became shoddy, and the business community itself incidentally lost the lead in business. * * *

"The first responsibility is one we all share; and that is to understand the nature of the city, as a many-sided collective expression of the best life possible, and to realize that its very differentiation and variety and concentration are needed in order to develop and transmit without serious loss, our rich, highly complex culture, with its ever-increasing store of scientific and humanistic achievement. For every sum therefore you are prepared to spend on behalf of the city's economic interests, be prepared to cover it with a comparable sum to further its intellectual and spiritual culture. * * *

"Your second social responsibility is to recognize the importance of the small unit, in any larger scheme of organization, and to restore the visible human scale and personal relationship. This means giving back to the smaller local group much of the autonomy and the initiative that have now been largely pre-empted by ever bigger centralized mechanical collectives. Here, at least in their purely physical decentralization, the metropolitan department stores have been leading the way: instead of continuing to mass their facilities under one roof, in a single business district, they have set up smaller stores at various points in the larger metropolitan area. But the same kind of diffusion of small organic units has become imperative in every other big institution. How many babies have been born in taxicabs, because delivery was scheduled for a distant, overgrown hospital and a traffic block stood in the way! * * *

"And now I come to your final social responsibility, and in every way your greatest one. This will tax to the full your skill and inventiveness, and will draw to the utmost on your civic pride. It is nothing less than that of helping to engineer the long needed shift from our present mechanically expanding economy, lopsided, humanly inadequate, capable of control in only one direction—going faster—to a more organic, balanced economy, with built-in controls and desirable human goals beyond those of indefinite physical expansion: an economy that does justice to human needs in the order of their social importance and personal significance. . . ."



Avalon Theatre, Chicago

Publications

The Best Remaining Seats, the Story of the Golden Age of the Movie Palace. Ben M. Hall. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc. 1961. 266 pp., 300 illus. $15.00

American cities have, over the years, boasted of various distractions, places where people of all walks of life, whole families, passed an afternoon or an evening in innocent pleasure. Around 1800 it was the "pleasure garden" with its graveled walks, its tables set in glades, music and, on occasion, theatre or fireworks. There was one in Philadelphia in the 1820's which was "Chinese" and it had a pagoda. The river and lake steamer of the Romantic Era was another; gaily, and even richly appointed these steamers were part of urban life. The amusement park at the end of the trolley line ("Ding, ding, ding went the trolley!") belonged to the turn of the century.

But all these were eclipsed by the movie palace of the 1920's. The movie business arrived on the scene when the American Renaissance still dominated the arts, and only the American Renaissance could answer the dream of a Roxy or some other equally bold impresario.

Even today when we visit the many that are still with us we gape in wonder, like little children. But then the fashion for modern art has so starved our daily lives that we are quite taken by surprise when presented with the visual feast of a movie palace.

The author, Ben M. Hall, must have been born in a loge of Atlanta's *Fox Theatre,* for he unfolds the story with such a mixture of knowledge, affection and humor that visions float from the pages. Intoxication, buoyed by the numerous illustrations, overwhelms us as if we were witnessing one of the spectacles of the '20's. Only on reflection do we sense a faint note of chagrin that our generation has failed because it can boast of nothing to equal these wonders of a previous generation. We do not seem to have the ability to have fun as they did thirty-forty years ago.

Here we meet the flamboyant Roxy, the architects, the conductors of the illuminated baton, the ushers, especially the Roxy ushers, the decorators, the organists and even the organ builders. Here is the story of the Mighty Wurlitzer, the one which still rises, divine-like, in darkened theatres across the land.

By his judicious use of history, Mr. Hall escapes the temptation of indulging nostalgia. In fact, he takes too much pleasure in the palaces to allow us to pull out a handkerchief. It is this pleasure, plus his enthusiastic appreciation and knowledge, which makes the subject so alive. After all, these palaces have not passed from our cities despite the scourge of the modern "improver." Many of them survive in triumph. What is more they offer a

vivid lesson to all who would attempt to build opera houses, theatres and concert halls. We cannot help reflecting that it is a pity that the promoters of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and similar ambitious projects did not look to our past as represented in these palaces. It is not enough to offer entertainment, be it ever so elevating, in interiors which recall the occupational therapy rooms of an expensive rest home. That turns the entertainment into something like spinach, which is supposed to be "good for you." Man asks for something more when he has to sit in an auditorium for two hours or so, even when listening to the noblest music or watching the greatest of plays. And the lessons are at hand in Seattle's *Fifth Avenue*, Atlanta's *Fox*, Brooklyn's *Paramount*, Los Angeles' *Los Angeles*, Chicago's *Orient* and San Francisco's *Fox*.

What is more, these palaces are truly in the great theatrical tradition, particularly of Europe's Baroque and Rococo and Paris' Second Empire. Were our projected theatres built in this tradition it might be easier to obtain public support for them.

Some of the palaces, like the *Roxy*, have gone, alas, and the *Fox* in San Francisco is threatened. This continuing destruction is a tragedy, for our movie palaces deserve to be preserved as part of the urban way of life, as among the brightest jewels in America's urban crown. If any instrument can stay the wrecker's iron ball, it is *The Best Remaining Seats* and that will be Mr. Hall's great reward.

—Henry Hope Reed, Jr.

Museums Directory of the United States and Canada. Ed. by Erwin O. Christensen. Washington, D. C.: American Association of Museums, 1961. 567 pp., index. $7.50 to individuals, $6.50 to libraries, both plus $.50 postage

This first-edition work attempts to answer the need for a definitive directory, listing all United States and Canadian museums and their facilities. The concisely presented information was obtained by questionnaires sent to 4500 institutions in the two countries. In addition to covering the general field of museums, special categories such as art centers, historic sites and houses, historical societies, botanical gardens and preservation projects are also described.

The first two sections of the volume list institutions both geographically by state or province, and alphabetically. A separate division is devoted to listing the directors or chief executives of these institutions. Part IV subdivides into four sections: institutions by category, individual members of the American Association of Museums, foreign members and advertisers. The subject index appears complete, and there is also a numerical index to the states and provinces, and a list of the governing authorities for the various museums.

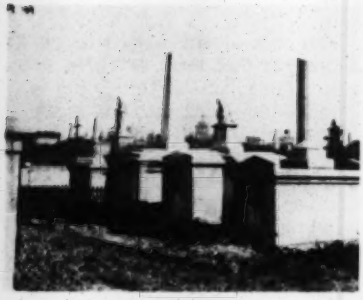
Additional information is promised for the next edition, but this is a commendable start to a long-needed study.

—M.M.D.

Directory of Historical Societies and Agencies in the United States and Canada. Compiled by Clement M. Silvestro and Sally Ann Davis. Madison, Wisconsin: The American Association for State and Local History, 1961. 111 pp., index. $1.50

Issued biennially, this guide once again proves a most useful publication. It gives a geographical list of active historical societies in the United States and Canada, and also includes a two-part index of the organizations alphabetically and according to subject.

—M.M.D.



Girod Street Cemetery 1945

To Glorious Immortality; the Rise and Fall of the Girod Street Cemetery. Leonard V. Huber and Guy F. Bernard. New Orleans: Alblen Books. 1961. 98 pp., biblio., index. $3.25.

For more than a century and a quarter, hundreds of names of the Protestant, American population of New Orleans, as distinguished from the Catholic, Creole segment, have been inscribed on the monuments, gravestones, slabs and vaults of the old Girod Street Cemetery. Although many of the city's most distinguished citizens here found their last resting place, that historic spot has now been swept away before the relentless march of progress. The day has finally arrived which was anticipated by those who established this cemetery when they purchased the ground from the city in 1822 with the provision that it was to be used "as a cemetery for the Protestants until it may please the City Council of New Orleans to change the location of this cemetery by reason of its proximity to the city."

A few of the outstanding vault slabs have been preserved largely through the efforts of the Louisiana Landmarks Society. The great majority, however, having first suffered the ravages of time, and then the wrecker's maul, have vanished altogether. Fortunately, in photographs and the written word, at least the most significant aspects of the Girod Street Cemetery are here preserved. To have permitted this record, so necessary to the proper interpretation of the history of New Orleans, to disappear into oblivion as has the cemetery itself, would have been unthinkable.

It is fortunate indeed that Leonard Huber recognized the value of this record not only to the people of this community but also to countless others throughout the country, descendants of those early citizens of New Orleans or of those many unfortunates who perished here in the dreadful epidemics of the last century. Mr. Huber's thorough knowledge and deep interest in the subject is ably reinforced by the photographic accomplishments of Mr. Bernard.

Though the brick and marble of this historic place are gone, here is preserved for future generations a vivid account of one of those facets of its life and history which makes New Orleans unique among the cities of America.

—Samuel Wilson, Jr., F.A.I.A.

CENTRAL CITIES

Cloethiel Smith, FAIA, of the Washington, D. C., firm of Satterlee and Smith

At the same time that Washington and every other major city seek to rebuild and renew their central cities, urban designers are confronted with a new and demanding element that tends to destroy or preclude the inclusion of the very qualities they seek to create.

If the surface of the city is so destroyed by brutal paved and walled gashes that separate it into a series of islands, it will become only a city for vehicles, and not a city for people, by destroying the elements in the city that bring people together and contribute to a rewarding urban life.

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